

Applicant: Kerry Charles Broad
Application No.: 10/656,644

IN THE DRAWINGS

All of the figures have been revised to remove boundary lines, reference number circling extraneous lines, and confusing labels as shown on the enclosed three Replacement Sheets.

REMARKS

The above amendment amends claim 1 and adds claim 2. The amendment to claim 1 addresses the Action's claim objections.

The Action objected to the drawings for several matters of form, which the newly submitted drawings address; the amendment to the Specification is made so that the Specification and the Drawings correspond to each other. None of these amendments adds new matter.

The Action rejected claim 1 as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 3,865,340 to Ellis. Ellis shows a support apparatus with a platform 1 that moves in three directions. The apparatus of Ellis is particularly suited for supporting "optical measurement and machine tools" in a "naval environment." Col. 2, lines 33-34 and Col. 3, line 24.

Ellis does not show or suggest what is claimed, namely a "collapsible handrail mechanism for steps or a ladder." Ellis contemplates a device for absorbing shocks to protect electrical devices aboard a naval vessel- it has nothing to do with a handrail. Ellis does not mention steps. Ellis does not mention handrails. Ellis does not mention a collapsible handrail. It fails to teach any of these claimed elements.

Ellis further does not show or suggest the claimed "stanchion." A stanchion is a strut that supports a guardrail or handrail, and Ellis makes no mention of same.

Ellis also does not show or suggest the claimed “latching mechanism having a slide plate preventing substantial downwards movement of the stanchion, a top plate preventing substantial upwards movement of the stanchion, and a side plate preventing substantial sideways movement of the stanchion.” The Action points to Ellis member 8 as anticipating this element, but it does not. Ellis member 8 is *not* a latching mechanism. It does not prevent downwards movement of anything, especially a stanchion. The Ellis members are specifically made for rotation and movement in three directions- not prevention of same, as claimed. Since preventing movement is the purpose of the claimed latching mechanism, Ellis does not anticipate it.

The Office Action does not point to any element or combination of elements that shows or suggest the claimed limitation: “in operation of the handrail mechanism from a stowed position, when the stringers are lowered the stanchion is thereby forced to slide on the slide plate causing the stanchion to pivot about its mounting up into an operational position.” The Action suggests that this is shown, and yet Ellis does not suggest two positions, stowed and operational, that the apparatus moves between.

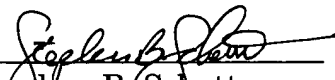
With respect to claim 2, Ellis member 3 rotates in two planes (Col. 2, lines 23-33), as opposed to the claimed stanchion that is “pivotally mounted for rotation in a single plane.”

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For the above reasons, the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that a telephone conference will advance the prosecution of this application, he is invited to contact the undersigned at his convenience.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerry Charles Broad

By 
Stephen B. Schott
Registration No. 51,296
(215) 568-6400

Volpe and Koenig, P.C.
United Plaza, Suite 1600
30 South 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103

SBS/tab
Enclosures